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INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE HASHDC 5886

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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4/1/87

EXDIS

E.O. 12065: GDS 10/3/85 (AMSTUTZ, J. BRUCE) OR-M

TAGS: PINT AF UR

SUBJ: SOME DISTURBING SIGNS AFFECTING AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE  
AND THE POSITION OF AMIN: PART ONE OF TWO

1. (S-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY. MUCH CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN WASHINGTON  
OVER SOVIET TROOP MOVEMENTS ON THE SOVIET SIDE OF THE OXUS,  
BUT MORE SIGNIFICANT AND OMINOUS MAY BE THE GROWING SOVIET  
MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN. THE NUMBER OF TROOPS  
AND MILITARY ADVISORS -- TOTALLING PERHAPS 7,000 -- AND  
THE ROLE THE LATTER ARE PLAYING, MAKES IT MOOT WHETHER THIS  
OR ANY OTHER AFGHAN REGIME CAN AGAIN EXERCISE FULL INDEPENDENCE.  
END SUMMARY.

3. WHILE A GREAT DEAL OF CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN  
WASHINGTON ABOUT THE POSSIBLE POSITIONING OF SOVIET AIRBORNE  
TROOPS JUST NORTH OF THE OXUS, I THINK A MORE DANGEROUS  
AND SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN THE CONTINUED  
BUILD-UP OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT AND FORCES IN THE COUNTRY,  
AND THE RECENT APPOINTMENT OF SOVIET GENERALS TO DIRECT

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THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN THE TROUBLED PRO-

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VINCES OF PAKTIA, GHAZNI AND KONAR.

4. TO RECAPITULATE THE SITUATION:

(A). SOVIET TROOPS ARE NOW KNOWN TO BE STATIONED IN THE FOLLOWING TWO STRATEGIC AREAS:

-- BAGRAM AIR FORCE BASE, LOCATED ABOUT 25 MILES NORTH OF KABUL, THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT AIR BASE IN THE COUNTRY. THE NUMBER OF SOVIET TROOPS GUARDING THE BASE IS MODEST: ABOUT 600. MORE SIGNIFICANT IS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN GIVEN CONTROL OF THE BASE. IT TOGETHER WITH KABUL AIRPORT (PARTLY AN AIRFORCE BASE AS WELL) ARE HIGHLY STRATEGIC POINTS FOR CONTROL OF THE CAPITAL AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

-- KABUL ITSELF AT PROBABLY THREE LOCATIONS: KABUL AIRPORT (AT THE AIRFORCE AREA), POL-I-CHARKI TANK BASE, AND THE MICRORAYON APARTMENT COMPLEX WHERE MANY SOVIETS LIVE. THESE TROOPS, NUMBERING PERHAPS 3,600 ARE PROBABLY HERE FOR SEVERAL PURPOSES, SUCH AS GUARDING THE SOVIET COMMUNITY IN THE EVENT OF CIVIL WAR AND CHAOS. THE TROOPS WOULD ALSO BE IN A POSITION TO TRY TO SECURE KABUL AIRPORT AND THE PRINCIPAL TANK BASE (OVER 150 TANKS) IF NECESSARY.

(B). THE AMOUNT OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT CONTINUES TO ARRIVE IN IMPRESSIVE AMOUNTS. THE LARGE NUMBER OF MILITARY TANKS AT POL-I-CHARKI TANK BASE APPEARS TO BE WELL IN EXCESS OF THE NUMBER OF AFGHAN TROOPS ABLE TO OPERATE THEM.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 7326

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Reviewed by: Ellen Kelly Jr.

Date: 4/17/87

(C). THE NUMBER OF SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS SEEMS TO BE ALWAYS INCREASING AND MAY NOW NUMBER ABOUT 3,000. (D). PERHAPS JUST AS IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT THE ROLE OF THESE MILITARY ADVISORS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ENHANCED OVER THE LAST SOME WEEKS. THIS MAY BE CONNECTED WITH THE 6-WEEK-LONG VISIT OF A CONTINGENT OF 13 SOVIET GENERALS IN COUNTRY. THE GROWING ROLE OF THE SOVIETS IS NOTICEABLE IN TWO WAYS. ONE IS THE ELEVATION OF THREE SOVIET GENERALS TO POSITIONS OF, IN EFFECT, DIRECTING THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN THE THREE MOST TROUBLED PROVINCES: PAKTIA, GHAZNI AND KONAR. THE OTHER IS GROWING EVIDENCE OF MORE SOPHISTICATED COUNTER-INSURGENCY TACTICS IN AT LEAST THE GHAZNI AREA, POINTING TO A SOVIET HAND.

5. I THINK THE EXPANDED SOVIET ROLE IN THE COUNTRY RAISES SOME FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL AND POLICY QUESTIONS FOR US. ONE IS WHETHER THE SOVIETS ARE NOT NOW IN SUCH AN INFLUENTIAL POSITION THAT THEY HAVE A CONTROLLING INFLUENCE OVER THE REGIME AND THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE. WHILE I DO NOT SUGGEST THAT THE COUNTRY HAS TOTALLY LOST ITS INDEPENDENCE, I WONDER WHETHER THE SOVIET PRESENCE AND  
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INFLUENCE HERE ARE NOT NOW SUCH THAT AFGHANISTAN SHOULD BE CLASSIFIED AS A SOVIET SATELLITE STATE AKIN TO MOST OF

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THOSE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND MONGOLIA. CERTAINLY, HAFIZULLAH AMIN, OR ANY OTHER PARTY SUCCESSOR, IS VERY BEHOLDEN TO THE SOVIETS TO STAY IN POWER. THE LEVERAGE AND INFLUENCE THE SOVIETS CAN NOW EXERT IS TREMENDOUS, AND GIVEN THE UNPOPULARITY OF THE KHALQIS, NO KHALQI REGIME COULD LAST A WEEK HERE WERE THE SOVIETS TO WITHDRAW THEIR SUPPORT. HAFIZULLAH AMIN AND SENIOR PARTY OFFICIALS MUST KNOW THIS.

6. I ALSO SEE NO LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SOVIETS INTEND TO DIMINISH THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE OR THEIR SPECIAL POSITION IN THIS COUNTRY. WERE HAFIZULLAH AMIN, OR A SUCCESSOR, TO DESIRE TO EXPEL THE SOVIETS, I DOUBT THEY COULD NOW DO IT. THE SOVIETS WOULD LIKELY RESPOND BY PUTTING FORWARD SOME AMENABLE KHALQI "LEADER" WHO WOULD "REQUEST" THE CONTINUED SOVIET PRESENCE, AND THERE ARE PROBABLY ENOUGH IN THE PARTY WHO WOULD GO ALONG WITH A CHANGE.

7. BY SEPTEL (PART TWO), I DISCUSS HAFIZULLAH AMIN, HIS LIKELY VISION OF THE SOVIET ROLE, AND WHERE THE U.S. MIGHT FIT IN.  
AMSTUTZ

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